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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 12th, 2009

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US Congressional Staff Delegation in Macedonia

A U.S. Congressional Staff Delegation representing the House Democracy Partnership (HDP) is visiting Macedonia to provide training on "Supporting Legislative Committee Operations." From November 10 -14, a staff institute is taking place in Mavrovo, organized by the HDP and the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia in cooperation with the National Democratic Institute (NDI) with USAID support. Selected committee staff members from the Parliament of Georgia, the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo, the State Great Hural of Mongolia as well as the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia are participating. This is the first HDP staff institute to taking place outside the United States and co-organized with a partner parliament.

Delegates will examine ways in which they can more effectively support committee operations, including organizing legislative and oversight hearings; soliciting public input on legislation; conducting policy and legal research to support committee deliberations; working effectively with the executive branch agencies that their committees oversee; and writing effective committee reports. In addition to training sessions, the delegates will have an opportunity to tour the Macedonian Parliament, as well as observe activities of the parliament.

The program is also intended to provide an opportunity for delegates to interact with their colleagues from other partner parliaments in the House Democracy Partnership program, as well as representatives from the international policy and donor communities.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

The House Democracy Partnership (HDP) was created by the U.S. House of Representatives in 2005. Its mission is to strengthen democratic institutions by collaborating with parliaments in developing democracies. Members of Congress as well as congressional staff work directly with their peers to provide technical expertise to enhance accountability, transparency, legislative independence, and government oversight in the parliaments. The HDP has 20 members, including both Democrats and Republicans, appointed by the Speaker and Minority Leader. The HDP works through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to provide material assistance to partner parliaments to improve the efficiency and transparency of their work.

The American people, through USAID, have invested nearly \$500 million in Macedonia since 1993. USAID is implementing projects that create jobs, reduce corruption, and prepare Macedonian students for the workforce. These initiatives improve the quality of life and support Macedonia's transition to a stable and prosperous democracy. USAID provides economic and humanitarian assistance in more than 100 countries. For more information please visit <http://macedonia.usaid.gov>.